

Message Text

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SUBJECT: TIMES EDITORIAL ENTITLED "APPEASEMENT IN OPORTO"

REPRODUCED BELOW IS THE COMPLETE TEXT OF AN EDITORIAL
APPEARING IN THE OCTOBER 17 "NEW YORK TIMES" ENTITLED
"APPEASEMENT IN OPORTO":

QUOTE: THE HIGHEST PRIORITY IN VOLATILE PORTUGAL MUST
BE THE RESTORATION OF DISCIPLINE IN THE ARMED FORCES.
WITHOUT MILITARY DISCIPLINE AND COHESION, PORTUGAL
WILL COLLAPSE INTO CIVIL WAR.

GIVEN THAT IMPERATIVE, THE PRICE PAID BY THE ARMY CHIEF
OF STAFF FOR A "PEACEFUL" END TO AN EIGHT-DAY MUTINY
BY MILITANT LEFT-WING TROOPS AT A BASE NEAR OPORTO SEEMS
DANGEROUSLY HIGH. GENERAL CARLOS FABIAO STOPPED SHORT
OF MEETING ALL DEMANDS OF THE MUTINEERS; BUT HE GAVE
IN TO ENOUGH OF THEM TO UNDERMINE THE AUTHORITY OF HIS
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REGIONAL COMMANDER, WHO HAD SOUGHT TO PUNISH THE LEFT-

WING REBELS, AND TO DEAL A SHARP BLOW AT PREMIER JOSE PINHEIRO DE ACEVEDO'S DRIVE TO RESTORE MILITARY DISCIPLINE AND UNITY.

WITH THE LOYALTY OF OTHER KEY UNITS IN DOUBT, IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT PREMIER AND ARMY CHIEF SHOULD EXERCISE EXTREME CAUTION IN DEALING WITH THE MUTINY. MODERATES CERTAINLY CONSTITUTE A LARGE MAJORITY IN THE MILITARY AS IN THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE; BUT ARMAMENT, LOCATION AND THE ZEAL OF THE RADICAL MINORITY ARE FACTORS THAT CANNOT BE IGNORED FOR THE SHORT RUN.

YET SUCH CONSIDERATIONS CANNOT ADEQUATELY ACCOUNT FOR GENERAL FABIAO'S AGREEMENT TO REINSTATE - WITH PRAISE - A TRANSPORT REGIMENT WHICH THE REGIONAL COMMANDER HAD ORDERED DISBANDED FOR FLOUTING MILITARY ORDERS. IF THE ARMY CHIEF BELIEVED SUCH APPEASEMENT WOULD QUIET THE REBELLION, HE ALREADY KNOWS BETTER: THE REVOLUTIONARY GROUPS IN THE ARMY ARE NOW DEMANDING SPECIAL LEGAL STATUS FOR THEIR ORGANIZATION.

THESE EVENTS HAVE ALSO RAISED AN URGENT POLITICAL QUESTION FOR ADMIRAL AZEVEDO: DOES IT MAKE SENSE TO RETAIN IN HIS GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES OF A COMMUNIST PARTY THAT, AFTER EARLIER HESITATION, IS NOW SIDING OPENLY WITH REVOLUTIONARY FORCES BENT ON DESTROYING THAT GOVERNMENT?

ADMIRAL AZEVEDO HAS GIVEN PORTUGAL A STARKLY ACCURATE REPORT ON THE ECONOMIC DISINTEGRATION OF THE COUNTRY CALLING FOR INDUSTRIAL DISCIPLINE, INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY AND SEVERE BELT-TIGHTENING. THE TRAGEDY IS THAT PORTUGAL CANNOT MAKE AN EFFECTIVE START TOWARD RECOVERY IN ANY OF THESE AREAS UNTIL THE GOVERNMENT HAS RESTORED DISCIPLINE TO THE ARMED FORCES, DISARMED THE MUTINEERS AND REMOVED THE THREAT OF CIVIL WAR." END QUOTE . INGERSOLL

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